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ABSTRACT

Decentralization has driven educational reforms in Norway since the 1970s, but this has raised questions of who should assume responsibility for education. Ways in which principals and teachers are affected by reform initiatives, such as the change of established zones of control as represented by a work-time agreement for teachers, are presented. The report highlights some problematic aspects of changed decision-making structures in schools. The study drew on qualitative data from two upper-secondary schools. Results show that the work-time agreement, which requires teachers to work 190 scheduled school hours per year, exclusive of their normal teaching hours, breaks the established practice and work culture of teachers who had enjoyed a large degree of professional autonomy. Furthermore, a sharper division between the administration team and the teachers has emerged as a consequence of a change in the role of the faculty head. The principal's role as employer, personnel manager, and educational leader cannot be fulfilled effectively with the present organizational structure in schools. Teachers feel they are mistrusted and energy is being concentrated upon the protection of established practices as opposed to educational improvements. An appendix offers an overview of Norway's educational system. (RJM)

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Educational Policy and School Leadership in Upper Secondary Schools: New Relationships and New Tensions

Paper (draft version) presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, April 13-17, 1998

Abstract

Decentralisation has been a key word in educational reforms in Norway since 1970. but in moving from central control towards more local control, the question of who should have the responsibility is raised, and the struggle between political and professional power over education has been sharpened. New constructs of principals as managing directors are also growing in prominence and power, and there is a tendency is to exert control over teachers' work and teachers' time. The paper explores how principals and teachers cope with reform initiatives like the change of established zones of control illustrated by a new agreement on work-time for teachers, and a revision of the role of faculty head. Both changes intend to assist the principal in organising professional staff collaboration in order to improve quality within schools. The discussion is based on qualitative data from two upper secondary schools in Norway.

Although the patterns emerging from the two case studies should be viewed cautiously, the study highlights some problematic aspects of changed decision-making structures in schools. The work-time agreement breaks the established practice and work culture of the individual teacher who has for a long time enjoyed a large degree of professional autonomy. It seems as the agreement is understood as an external attack upon teachers' autonomy. In addition a sharper division between the administration team and the teachers seems to emerge as a consequence of the new role of faculty head. It is quite obvious that the principal's role as employer, personnel manager and educational leader cannot be fulfilled effectively with the present organisation structure in school. However, the extra administrative level disrupts the school's flat organisational structure and traditional distribution of power and duties. Hierarchical and administrative duties are intensified, and this is coupled with external regulatory demands from society. It seems like there is a power struggle in society for who should define qualitative teaching. There are other social groups wishing to define educational quality, but, as yet, they have had little bearing upon the practice in schools. Problems arise when the education system lacks a common identity connected to educational theory. Teachers are faced with a trade-off between accountability and autonomy in schools. However, an autonomous profession does not necessarily mean better practice.

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Introduction

Background

During the period 1994-1997 extensive changes have taken place in Norwegian upper secondary education. The restructuring, called Reform 1994, was initiated by parliament in 1992 and consequently approved in 1994. The reform is intended to have a wide-reaching consequence on secondary education in many ways. School Leaders have become targets as well as agents of change in a drive for school improvement. The new role demands a more active participation on issues concerning classroom practices, demands more supervisory activities, and puts more emphasis on the employer role. In Norway, so far, we have had no teacher appraisal. According to tradition, the head seldom interferes with what is going on in the classroom. Trust in teachers' work has for long been a tacid dimension in heads' approach to educational administration. There has been accepted zones of influence which are now challenged.

Questions

The paper, drawn from a qualitative research project, explores how principals and teachers cope with reform initiatives like the change of established zones of control illustrated by a new agreement on work-time for teachers, formal expectation of more collaboration among teachers, and a revision of the role of faculty head. Questions include: *How has the new agreement on work-time for teachers affected working together for quality within schools? What is the effect of changed decision-making structures on heads' and teachers' professional identity?*

Methodical Approach

Case Studies were chosen to investigate the above questions (Flyberg 1991, Merriam 1991). This form of research allows for an in-depth study of opinions and justification, which may be analysed in the context of a local school culture and framework.

Two upper secondary school were selected as case studies. They are within the same county, yet possess different course structures; one school offers general subject courses and the other offers both general and technical vocational courses. Both schools are noted, within the region, for their good organisation and education. However, their architecture, history, age, size and local environment, subject courses and pupil recruitment policies vary greatly. Therefore, one might assume that the practice of the new work-time agreement, educational administration and staff collaboration at the two schools also vary (Arfwedson and Lundman 1984).

Interviews have been used as the main method of investigation. The changing processes focused upon within this study primarily affect the administration team, faculty heads and teachers. All those holding formal administrative position in addition to some teachers have been interviewed. At both schools, the teaching staff is large, therefore, it was necessary to select representatives based on subject department and faculty, year groups taught, length of employment at the school and sex. In total, 21 interviews were conducted at school A and 14 interviews at school B. In addition to these interviews, I observed both heads, for two days, to get and idea of a randomly selected school day. Each interview lasted approximately 1½ hours and covered the following topics: local school culture, the role of administration, specific pedagogical leadership, collaboration between teachers/administration team and

experiences of the work-time agreement as means to improving working together for quality within schools.

Analytical Perspectives

Collaboration in connection with teaching between different groups in school implies that teaching, school quality and pupil achievement become items for discussion at school meetings. But as Hargreaves (1994) has said, collaboration and collegiality are often discussed as if they are widely understood. In my discussion I will 1) refer to studies of 'school effectiveness' which see collaboration and collegiality as forming vital bridges between school improvement and teacher development (Mortimore 1988, Rosenholz 1989), 2) discuss conditions of professionalism (Handal 1989, Dale 1993), 3) include critiques of and a micropolitical perspective on collaboration and collegiality (Hargreaves 1994, Klette 1994). I will refer to the distinction between 'contrived collegiality', 'collaborative cultures' and 'balkanized cultures' which Hargreaves has introduced.[1] According to Hargreaves may 'contrived collegiality' result in «inflexibility and inefficiency - in terms of teachers not meeting when they should, of meeting when there is no business to discuss, and of being involved in peer couching schemes which they have misunderstood or not been able to work through with suitable partners» (op.cit., p.208).

In my discussion of heads' and teachers' professional identity, I will refer to Erling Lars Dale's (1997) analysis of quality within the education system. Teachers and administrators, at various levels within schools, have different functions and knowledge, but they have a joint responsibility for providing pupils with a quality education. The professional identity one develops becomes apparent through interaction with others working at the same school, through interaction with other schools and other areas of the education system. Dale is interested in the relationship between the identity one develops at work, the reference frames one uses in defining each others' duties and the joint effort made to develop quality in schools. He views this identity in relation to four dimensions which form the basis for a social system: *collaboration, stability, homogeneity and communication*. In contrast to these, he places *individuality, mobility, heterogeneity and isolation*. Hence, creating a series of contentions. If a system consists solely of contentions, an imbalance arises, preventing a common professional identity. However, a certain amount of contention between collaboration and individuality, and homogeneity and heterogeneity is required for development. There must also exist a common knowledge of technical language and concepts used for discussing quality within education. Communication must be rooted in teaching-related criteria. Otherwise, there is a danger the collaboration between administrators and teachers is dominated by administration, regulation and sanctions (cf. Weber 1990)

In my discussion of school leaders as agents of change in a drive for school improvement, I will combine a structural, a political and a symbolic perspective on leadership and school as organisation (House 1981, Hoyle 1986, Ball 1987, Blase 1988, Bolman and Deal 1991, Christensen 1991, Røvik 1992, 1998). A structural frame emphasises goals, roles, formal relationships, and the rational side of organisation. A political perspective involves regarding

[1] The features of contrived collegiality tend to be administratively regulated, compulsory, implementation-oriented, fixed in time and space, and predictable. Collaborative cultures tend to be spontaneous, voluntary, development-oriented, pervasive across time and space, and unpredictable. Balkanization of teaching is a kind of collaboration that divides teachers into competing sub-groups within a school. (Hargreaves 1994, p.192ff)

leadership as a process, where power, authority and competing interests are in focus. Schools are taken to be arenas of struggle and places where interpersonal influence, compromise and negotiation are as important as formal procedures and official meeting. A key concern is the ways individuals and groups can realise their values at the expense of others. Similarities and differences between groups within the organisation are highlighted. A symbolic perspective explores how organisations create meaning and belief through symbols, including myths. These myths are thought to be objective, but, in reality, they result from specific social and political definitions and dominance. Myths are circulated to promote legitimacy in areas of inconsistency. For example, outwardly, a new administrative system is seen to indicate renovation and increased efficiency within schools.

The schools in the study

Summary of the schools' history, course structure and the staff's professional background[2].

At both schools, the teachers have strong academic backgrounds and have been employed at their respective schools for a long period of time. The average age of the staff is between 40 and 50. School A was built approximately 20 years ago as a combined, upper secondary school, on the city's outskirts. The modern buildings encompass comprehensive study facilities. When the school was opened, most of the teachers were newly qualified and open-minded. This has since been regarded as a conscious recruitment plan by the first head. Most of the general subject course teachers have a university education and most of the vocational training course teachers have a well-rounded career background from the private sector, in addition to their 1 or ½ year pedagogical education. Good inter-faculty relations have always been encouraged to avoid divisions and cliques occurring. However, an awkward conflict arose a couple of years ago when a quarrel within the administration team led to a rift among the staff. Discrimination and whispering behind closed doors resulted in the head's resignation and the appointment of a new head. The new head, who was recruited internally, had worked at the school since its opening. Following this upheaval, it became vital for the school to regain administrative stability and order. The administration team is now recognised for its efficient teamwork. There may be squabbles internally, but never externally. The administration team consist of the head and four deputy heads, and eight persons hold positions as faculty heads.

School B is an old, respected school, which was built as a four year middle school more than eighty years ago. At that time, it was located in country surroundings, but today it is part of the city centre. Shortly after its foundation, the school acquired upper secondary school status. The school's exterior is impressive, but refurbishment is required internally. The majority of the staff has a university education. Many of the school's past heads have been described as pioneers of school politics. Phrases such as 'cultural personalities' and 'the spiritual elite' are also used to describe the school's previous employees. The school has a long-held reputation for its instruction of the arts, and many renowned writers and artists have been pupils. The instruction of traditional subjects is deeply rooted, and many believe much of the old Latin school remains. The school has experienced a division between the arts and sciences. The present head was appointed two years ago, after having been head at a

[2] Appendix 1 gives a brief account of the Educational System in Norway.

combined, upper secondary school, within the same county. The administration team consist of the head and three deputy heads, and three persons hold positions as faculty heads.

Which pupils do the schools recruit?

The two schools have quite different pupil recruitment policies. School A recruits primarily from its local catchment area, although the vocational training course pupils do tend to come from further afield. 30% of the pupils do not have Norwegian as their mother tongue, which according to staff, creates tensions if different cultural groups have conflicting behavioural norms. The school is situated on the city's outskirts, which appears to influence the recruitment of general course pupils. At present, the city centre schools appear to be most attractive to pupils, and this has been made known up by the media, making school A's recruitment a struggle. To counter this problem, teachers are working extra hard to encourage pupils to be proud of their school. The staff find most of the pupils are happy, friendly and honest. However, as at other schools, there are some exceptions and these exceptions demand a lot of time and attention. It is not a hard competition for entry.

School B, which offers mainly general subject courses, is very popular and competition for entry is tough. On average, the pupils have extremely good, lower secondary school grades and come from all over the city. The teachers insist that their pupils have no disciplinary problems. They also stress that the school's is fortunate in having very bright pupils. The pupils have heterogeneous opinions and interests. The school has almost no pupils who do not have Norwegian as their mother tongue.

Cultures of teaching

The teachers at school A describe themselves as a team who take care of each other, are knowledgeable, independent and socially oriented. There is a lively atmosphere in the staff room with a sense of openness, a pulsating environment and no set sitting arrangements. There is plenty informal interdisciplinary communication, and socialising outside school. Six different faculties contribute to producing a varied environment. All the staff express their pride and satisfaction with their work.

According to the majority of teachers at school A, there is little professional collaboration, despite their good social relations. Several teachers feel that professional collaboration could be improved. Generally, they are primarily concerned with their own subject and teaching. Within all the departments, the teachers feel they have a great degree of freedom in planning their individual lessons. Those who wish to work together, do so because they enjoy it and find it worthwhile.

The teachers at school B remark that professional collaboration varies from department to department. The school is built upon strong subject identities with a high academic emphasis. Subject evenings have been arranged, and these have been organised by individuals on an unofficial basis for those with similar interests. Like school A, the teachers enjoy a large degree of freedom when planning lessons, and they are primarily concerned with their own subject teaching.

The teachers at school B also express their job satisfaction. At the same time many teachers refer to a division among staff which is made clear in the staff room. The science teachers

gather round the centre table, and the arts teachers sit around a large, round table. Different subject groups have gone through phases of dominance, and over the last decade, that position has been held by the science section.

Despite the staff at school A describing themselves as a team and the staff at school B being aware of their divisions, the teacher cultures at the two schools do have similar traits. For example, both schools display a combination of individualism and voluntary collaboration. The differences in the schools' local cultures, i.e., history, location, pupils etc., suggests that other factors are at play in creating teacher cultures. Such factors might be the teachers' common pedagogical training and that they have all been pupils at one stage. In addition, there is the practical organisation of the school day, with subjects being divided into lessons and minutes, and pupils into classes.

The teachers at both schools view the head as a manager. The administration team is expected to take care of the practical side of running the school, which should be done decisively, fairly and economically. One of the teachers at school A admits there has been a change in the perception of upper secondary school administration, but personal expectations remain largely unaltered:

When I started teaching, I expected the administration team to function as a service group, whose job it was to set everything up for me and my teaching. Deep down, I still feel the same, but the administration has clearly become more authoritative. I also believe that an ideal head should have visions, so one has the sense of making headway. However, on a daily basis, I have little need for contact with the head. I was about to say: I want peace and praise.

The faculty heads at school A insist that the administrator's managerial dominance has become less conspicuous: *"Previously, the administrator was there to serve us." "The head was like a financial secretary who did not get involved in classrooms activities"* All the same, the administration team stands at the heart of all operations, at a school level and above. If problems arise on the practical administration level, dissatisfaction abounds all round. The authorities would like to see the head as *an agent of change, and an instigator* of the local curriculum initiative. The heads should be involved in the classroom, from both a developmental and regulatory perspective. This is possibly the most controversial aspect of the change affecting the role of the administration team. In White Papers from the Government it seems to be a strong belief that better leadership and assessment in school are «keys» to school improvement and to implementing new national curriculum guidelines. Changes within the administration, and the work-time agreement are seen as administrative tools to meet these expectations. But contradictions are detectable. In national curriculum guidelines, school democracy and teacher professionalism are emphasised. The teacher seems to be the «key» to school improvement.

Collaboration for quality within schools - the work-time agreement as an administrative tool.

The teachers' autonomy in relation to planning, implementing and evaluating teaching has long been regarded as an aspect of their professionalism. However, Reform 94 requires teachers to participate in collective activities more than before, with pupils who are more complex than

ever before. Therefore, increased communication and a pooling of knowledge is required to put theory into practice.

The work-time agreement, which became effective from the 1st January 1994, requires the teachers to work 190 scheduled school hours per year, exclusive of their normal teaching hours. The 190 hours are divided, so that each teacher has 5 extra hours per week. In addition to these hours, the teachers must participate in 5 days worth of joint planning/evaluation and training per year.

According to the Ministry for Education Research and Church Affairs, the agreement does not only change the school's content and structure, it also acts as a necessary tool for the implementation of educational-political objectives. The agreement should assist the head in organising professional staff collaboration. The curriculum's general introduction specifically outlines the need for teachers to work together to share the responsibility for the pupils' development.

With reference to the work-time agreement, **school A** has assigned five hours per week to joint activities, of which three hours are scheduled. The majority of those interviewed appreciated the intention of these meetings, but were dissatisfied with the content. The administration team decided these meetings should be used for form class teacher discussions, department meetings and personnel meetings. The initiative for such collaboration has a tendency to come from above, as opposed to within. The administration team argues that if such collaboration is to work, it needs to be scheduled, as the following quote illustrates:

Certainly, the administration is normally responsible for setting up such meetings, and I am afraid it becomes a matter of obligation. On several occasions, we have tried to introduce a decentralised model where the teachers are responsible for taking the initiative, but this has been without success. For example, we have tried colleague-based supervision: the teachers were to find themselves a partner and arrange a meeting time, however this failed. Only after we decided who was to work with whom, and when, did it work. Everything went fine until Christmas. We thought we had everything up and running, but we were mistaken. When we reduced our supervision, the arrangement fell through. [...] It is true, if one is asked to do something which does not have set guidelines and deadlines, we opt to do something we consider more interesting. Indeed, the teachers have plenty to do. It is not about that.

The lack of initiative is confirmed by the majority of faculty heads. They admit themselves, that they take too little initiative:

We take incredibly little initiative in bringing up matters at faculty meetings, and I really don't know why. The faculty meetings become information meetings. They last three quarters of an hour, with the administration team using that amount of time to pass on information which could be passed on in another way. Perhaps, more controversial matters which require more discussion should be prioritised on the agenda. Often, the head has set up a perfectly acceptable proposal which is difficult to dispute.

The teachers see the need to work together, but find it problematic to confine the content of the discussions to relevant matters, as the following quote from a teacher illustrates:

We have now arranged three meetings per week. That's fine, but I'm not sure whether there should be three, or whether they should be arranged for the whole school simultaneously. There are so many departments and groups meeting at the same time, that there is little time for interdisciplinary matters. How are we supposed to fit that into a hectic day? Furthermore, it is difficult for teachers who belong to more than one department. Perhaps one of the hours at a class level could be designated for matters as they arise. Sometimes, I feel we have meetings for meetings' sake. I believe another kind of arrangement would produce better results. Not all the departments should hold their meetings at exactly the same time, despite the advantages of this arrangement. Interdisciplinary collaboration is prevented by "I'm sorry I can't attend; I am supposed to be at x-meeting." The department meetings have become information meetings with numerous handouts . The amount of handouts has increased because there is so much one is supposed to know.

School A has drawn up written contracts for each teacher regarding the use of their 190 hours. The work-time agreement presupposes that. The administration team is split in their opinion of the work-time agreement. Three of the five feel the agreement has been unfortunate for the school, and although it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from their replies, there is little evidence to suggest that the agreement has improved the quality of the teachers' work. Those teachers who were hardworking before, do so today. Those who were not working hard, have not changed their minds either. Generally, though, there has been an increase in grumbling and a lot of time has been spent interpreting the agreement and counting hours. The head and one of the deputy heads comment:

I don't think we have gained much. [...] We have an instrument with which we may pressure the teachers to work, but the quality of what they do has remained the same. Neither quality not quantity has increased, despite more work-time being allocated. By this, I mean that those teachers who have always that little bit extra do so now, as they did before. Those who almost need to be threatened to work that bit extra, remain the same.

The work-time agreement has become the centre of discussion and it is incredible how much time has been spent on its interpretation and implementation. In time, people will come to think of their work-time as the time they spend at school for their employer. The school owns you work-time more than it did before. There is a shift away from the individual deciding how to organise their teaching time in and outside the classroom. People have become fussy about their time, and I constantly hear, "I don't have time to, I've used up my time quota." I have little sympathy for this kind of attitude. I find it all quite comical, the way people are so engrossed in calculating how many hours they have spent. I look forward to the day when it is possible to ask someone to do something without having to discuss hours and minutes. The point is to get the work done.

Two administration members see the positive consequences of the new agreement. There was a need for collaborative planning. They acknowledge the agreement has brought about a large amount of change for the teachers and that some teachers feel they have lost a number of privileges related to their job. In the long run, they believe it will produce better teaching for the pupils, particularly due to the increased collaboration among the teachers. It should be a matter of course that if one is paid for a full-time position, one works full-time.

Most faculty heads at school A are critical of the agreement. On the one hand, it is positive that staff collaboration has been timetabled, and time is set aside for planning, but on the other

hand, the agreement has robbed the teachers of their desire to make an effort. Many of the teachers feel the scheduled meetings are a waste of time, but those who are dissatisfied do very little to change matters. The main problem is teachers feel they are suspected of not doing their job correctly. They feel they are unappreciated and the work-time agreement is regulatory measure rather than an opportunity to work towards good teaching. Form filling has increased markedly and the bureaucratisation of teachers' work has made time counting an objective in itself. Only one faculty head, responsible for a vocational subject faculty, considers the work-time agreement acceptable because it helps to allocate people so that collaboration is possible.

Only one out of the eight teachers interviewed has positive feelings towards the agreement, these being for the three hours set aside for scheduled meetings. The other teachers are critical of the agreement and describe how it has led to shameful time counting and derision of their professionalism. Several of the teachers feel the agreement suggests their work is being brought under question by the employer. The idea is to do a job as well as possible for the pupils' sake, not to register time for the sole satisfaction of the levels above. The following comments are typical for this group:

I think it is sad that some of the teachers argue: "I can't talk to you now because I have used my time designated for my pupils." In other words, they go around with stopwatches in their pockets. One of the attractions of a being a teacher is being able to be enthusiastic, a little idealistic and committed to one's job. One should stick to one's guns when restrictions are set from above. We must do what is worthwhile, that is what our jobs are all about. [...] I think it is extremely sad that commitment and enthusiasm is lost in formal discussions over what does and does not lie within our work schedules.

There is a great deal of watch checking. Before, we managed to get a lot done without counting hours. You saw yourself as a professional - you got your classes and a description of what you had to do. You did the job whether it took a long time of not. Now we have an arrangement which requires us to keep count. As soon as someone starts to count, everyone starts counting so that it results in elegant time keeping and trivial arguments. The arguments are aggravated by the teachers feelings of being underpaid. In addition, we have had an employer on a higher level who has not shown any particular respect for teachers. I'm referring to the Ministry. Thus, the whole situation has turned sour.

Unfortunately the agreement seems to have failed to achieve its objective of improving collaboration. On the contrary, as school A, its realisation in time keeping has created unnecessary frustrations and bureaucracy. However, it is agreed that meetings in the course of a working day are required.

School B has three scheduled meeting hours per week, filling a midday timetable slot. The teachers had hoped for four hours but the head decided to side with the pupils wanted only three. If the teachers wanted four hours, the fourth hour would have had to be held in the afternoon, something the teachers did not want. With reference to Reform 94, the head wants to see the time used in developing local curricula and conducting pupil advisory hours. Follow-up work is left to the faculty heads. There has been some resistance among the staff, as the following comments, from a faculty head and teacher, suggest:

Irritation has arisen with the numerous plans and forms. They leave me with less time top prepare my lessons. I believe I should be able to do things my way. As long as it works, I should be left alone. It is not exactly radical, but I think it works. (Faculty head of science)

A negative outcome of Reform 94 are the local curricula and the way in which these are formulated. In my opinion, it is pointless. First, we are supposed to discuss how we interpret "the pupils shall be acquainted with ..." and then we are supposed to come to a joint conclusion. All the while, we know that the text books and exams are the real steering elements. We are now forced to work with local curricula, something we have not done before. I don't see why they can't decide on a national curriculum. There is so much conflicting information. On the one hand, we should draw up local curricula, and on the other, there is talk of creating standardisation via the national exam. I fail to see how this can provide the pupils with a better education. [...] The head initiates the collaboration. She calls upon the faculty heads to discuss a number of matters at a faculty level, who in turn, call department meetings. There is a growing amount of meetings and an increasing amount of scepticism among the teachers. Motivation within the department is vital for it to function. [...] You often hear: "Is there another meeting, now?" and the faculty head replies that it has been decided by the head. We are a group of individuals working here, we need to understand <u>why</u> it is important to collaborate.

School B has chosen not to draw up individual written agreements. The head feels the attention given to the number of hours is an unfortunate aspect of the work-time agreement. She is more in favour of the tasks in hand. If people are motivated by the task, they use the time required to see it completed. A strict handling of the agreement leads to time keeping in a negative fashion. She does not want to encourage that. However, she has said that if a teacher wishes a written agreement, they may have one. So far, no-one has asked for one. According to the head, the positive aspect of the work-time agreement is that one is able to make demands for meeting, collaborative planning and evaluation of teaching. The other members of the administration team support this view and emphasise the importance of knowing a task is being carried out without their immediate involvement. At school B, no one feels that the agreement has had any particular effect upon their work, neither positive nor negative. The majority of teachers agree there has been a liberal interpretation of the agreement - a wise decision on the administration's part. They also feel the agreement has not induced any more collaboration than there was before.

The teachers' time management has perhaps been more effective at school B. Both heads demand collaborative planning of local curricula, and both schools have allotted approximately the same amount of time to this, albeit school A has formalised its use of time to a greater extent.

The revision of the role of faculty head in upper secondary schools

Running an upper secondary school is a complex task. Therefore, it is usual to consider the management as a team effort, with numerous members of staff fulfilling different administrative roles, (White Paper no. 37, 1990-91). The larger the organisation, the more important it is to distribute administrative duties. The position of faculty head was established to help the teachers and head coordinate teaching activities within each faculty. Responsibilities included coordinating department meetings, promoting subject/pedagogical collaboration among teachers, supervising the preparation of internal examinations, initiating

work placement contacts and coordinating budget plans and faculty purchases. In practice, the tasks have primarily been administrative.

An award of the 29th March 1996 led to a decentralisation of internal organisation. Schools were given greater freedom to appoint faculty heads. At some schools, this resulted in a reduction of faculty heads, whereas at other schools, it resulted in an increase in number.

Since the 1997 autumn term, **School A** has been running a trial project where department heads function as faculty heads. The framework has been enlarged, as have the responsibilities. The school has also devised its own set of guidelines for faculty heads. These are very similar to those of the previous department head, but the position is now regarded as part of the school's administration team. They are no longer solely the teachers' representative, as they have often been regarded before. The faculty head is in charge of pedagogical affairs and has the task of coordinating teaching and ensuring directives are followed. In addition, they prepare local curricula, internal examination papers and oversee budgets and teaching materials. Personnel responsibility is not part of the position.

The administration team at school A has been actively and strategically involved in setting up this project. They are convinced it will cause administrative duties to be carried out effectively. Furthermore, the restructuring is considered to be an exciting process. One administration team member points out:

The school has become autonomous. We have financial management and complete responsibility for personnel and property. Indeed, everything concerning the management of the school is part of our responsibility. Therefore, we have many more duties. The running of a large, combined upper secondary school, such as this, requires management similar to corporation management. The top management is removed from individual affairs, whether they concern teachers or pupils, due to the incorporation of intermediate level. This is what we are working on. It is possible for the head of a large school to supervise, for example, 800 pupils and 120 members of staff.

Another administration team member argues:

The reorganisation of the administration is exciting. It will award greater responsibility to faculty heads. [...] Previously, the faculty head functioned as an administrator dealing with course enquiries and taking necessary action, discussing the written exam and other mundane tasks with little definite responsibility.

The faculty heads at school A feel they should have educational leadership responsibilities connected to specific subjects, but so far, they have been acting in a purely administrative capacity. The administration team wishes to see faculty heads as part of the formal administration team, whereas many teachers still want the faculty head to be their representative. One of the faculty heads explains:

For many teachers, the faculty head is the sorter and the fixer: «Set things up for me, make sure I have books, find things for me, always know what is written in the circulars," and so forth. I prefer to be an educational leader. Today, there is often a lot of improvisation. People come and seek advice when they are unsure how to grade work, or about subject related matters. I like these kind of enquiries. It becomes an extension of my role as a

teacher. [...] At the moment, we are debating whether the faculty head should have personnel responsibilities. The concept of personnel responsibilities is complex, and there are some things I am glad we do not have responsibility for, for example, granting leave. It is quite alright that it is decided centrally; particularly when the faculty heads' responsibilities cross, sometimes one teacher can actually have three different faculty heads. In time, individual staff discussion hours could be handed over to the faculty heads. I think that would be wise, but not yet. Neither the faculty heads, nor the rest of the staff are ready for that yet. There is strong resistance among some of the teachers, and having discussion hours with someone who doesn't want to have them with you is pointless.

The teachers are split in their feeling towards the reorganisation. Some fear it will be difficult to adhere to the administrative links, the distance between them and the head will be increased and contact reduced. Nevertheless, two teachers have positive expectations and other teachers regard the faculty head's possible personnel responsibility as both positive and negative. The following quote captures this sentiment:

Now they are talking of the faculty head being given greater heresy over personnel. This has both positive and negative aspects. We will have a closer relationship with the faculty head in a teaching situation, but the distance to the rest of the administration will be increased. Sometimes, you want a little more distance between you and the person who has personnel responsibility above you. Yet on other occasions, it can be advantageous to have them more closely involved in your teaching. They get to know the pupils so they can provide pupil-related advice, especially if it concerns a specific pupil. On the other hand, a faculty head does not have the same weight of authority as the others in the administration team.

The following quote summarises the scepticism among the teachers:

The faculty heads are now to function as intermediaries, an I am rather sceptical towards this because of the many steps between you and the person you really want to deal with. I find myself asking: "Is it really necessary to have more administrative levels? How many more are going to control us?"

At **school B**, the head works with the deputy as part of a strong administration team. So far, no steps have been taken to introduce an administrative position at a departmental level and the traditional faculty head system remains. The faculty head has been given several pedagogical duties by the head, as have the rest of the administration team. She has meetings with the faculty heads approximately twice a month and they have been assigned the responsibility of setting up planning days, following up local curricula work and initiating collaboration. The administration team considers it necessary to make demands upon the faculty heads to realise the reform.

On the contrary, the faculty heads do not think their allocated tasks are in keeping with the administrative resources available to them:

The instructions we receive are so vague you can do almost anything and nothing. During the few years I have been faculty head, my tasks have grown in number. For example, budgeting was never my responsibility, but now I am forever called upon to draft budgets, sign requisitions and oversee orders. The faculty head is called upon in connection with numerous matters. We have heard that now there is to be an intermediate level. I feel we are

about to become intermediaries without being given the time and economic resource required. [...] As a result, I go around with a constant guilty conscience. I feel it is affecting my teaching. Neither am I able to do all the things I am supposed to as faculty head. I either don't get the work done on time, or I don't get it done at all. I go around with a bad conscience thinking of all the things I should have done or followed up. It is very frustrating.

The teachers consider the faculty head as their representative. This is opinion is shared by the faculty heads, as exemplified by the following quote: *"I am a teacher, not a manager, so I will always be loyal to my teachers. That is where I belong. I am a kind of spokesperson for them, against the administration if need be."* The faculty head deals with administrative relations. The debate surrounding faculty heads is not an issue among the teachers at school B. But they will probably soon have to face it. The county administration is following carefully the experiences other schools, like school A, are having.

The above describes how the heads at both schools have opted for different strategies. This may be due to a combined school being a complex organisation and better suited do a divisional structure. Many of the vocational subject teachers will probably have experienced an intermediary arrangement in the private sector. The altered administrative system will be nothing new to them. The crisis within school A's administration team, which occurred several years ago, may have quickened the process to establish a new administrative system. School B's head was recruited externally and, therefore, must learn to handle an established culture before proposals for change may be won. In addition, the need for an intermediary position may not seem so pressing when the school has mainly general subject studies.

Discussion

Collaboration and Collegiality

Collaboration and collegiality are often connected to professionalism. It is expected that teachers share and develop their expertise together. Carr and Kemmis (1986) describe for instance a professional teacher as a person who

> *plans thoughtfully, acts deliberately, observes the consequences of action systematically, and reflects critically on the situational constraints and practical potential of the strategic action being considered. He or she will also construct opportunities to carry this private discourse into discussion and debate with others - teachers, students, administrators and the school community. In so doing, he or she helps to establish critical communities of enquirers into teaching...» (p. 40)*

Carr and Kemmis argue that *«more extensive professional autonomy and responsibility require that teachers themselves build educational theory through critical reflection on their own practical knowledge»* (op.cit.: p.41). And many will perceive collaboration as a positive concept when discussing professionalism in schools. For example, studies have shown that collaboration among staff correlates with good results among pupils (Mortimore 1988, Rosenholz 1989). What <u>should</u> be the case, is opposite to the findings of Lorties' sociological studies (1975) of teachers in five American cities which showed that teachers, as a group, are characterised by "conservatism, individualism and presentism". Rosenholz's comprehensive studies of teaching finds for instance that developing schools have staff who make an effort to work together. They give each other feedback and are willing to analyse their teaching

practice with their colleagues. One is more willing to experiment when one has supportive co-workers. Hence, there seems to be a connection between teacher collaboration and school development. However, as Handal (1989) and Dale (1993) has pointed out, it requires both time and knowledge of common terminology for discussing educational quality (Handal 1989, Dale 1993).

But collaboration is not always described positively. It may assume many forms and mark teacher cultures in various ways. This is often ignored in studies emphasising the positive aspects of collaboration. Andy Hargreaves' research (1994) of teaching introduced the concept of "contrived collegiality" as a phenomenon linked to strategies for school development. Collaboration is initiated from above with the intention of increasing cooperation among teachers, however, as Hargreaves points out, if the teachers' professionalism is trampled upon, the result may be inefficiency and a lack of flexibility.

The descriptions of school A and B seem to confirm Lorties' findings. The teachers treasure their individual autonomy, even though they understand that teamwork is desirable for some purposes. They are in favour of collaboration in schools, and they admit that in one way it is positive that staff collaboration has been timetabled. However, they wish to define the conditions themselves. A question is do they grasp the arena established through the work-time-agreement? Are they in position of grasping the arena?

The administration team at school A suggested that collaboration will not occur if their involvement is reduced. The work-time agreement helps to enforce collaboration, despite its present lack of success. At present, the administration team's suggestions regarding cooperation dominate meetings. However, despite the dissatisfaction with the agreement, little has been done to change matters. This dissatisfaction is in keeping with the findings of a survey carried out among Norsk Lærerlag (Norwegian Teachers' Union) members (Klette and Norborg 1995). This survey concluded that the agreement has led to increased communication among staff, but that the time allocated for professional collaboration was wasted. Meetings received a very low ranking among teachers. So, why do resourceful teachers not do something about it?

An Ideology of Professionalism?

Klette (1997) has looked at the relationship between professionalism and the work-time agreement as an administrative tool, and how this contributes to making teachers obedient and dutiful employees. Instead of organising a professional debate covering the criteria of good teaching, the teachers react to the changes with apathy and despondency. She argues that one reason could be that the new working time agreement is built into the rhetoric of professional responsibility. The concept of professionalism thus has an ideological function obscuring the realities of the changing conditions of teaching.

The teachers interviewed in this project, do not seem to suffer form apathy and despondency. They have confidence in their own competence, and they are angry. However, they do not choose an offensive position in order to initiate an internal debate about criteria for good teaching. In stead they concentrate on pragmatic matters relating to their use of time. At both schools, there is little interest for local union activities. According to teachers, the agreement has done little to change their actual teaching, although their school day has become more hectic. There is a great deal of form filling, which they regard unnecessary. Irritation is

directed at the Ministry, not at the individual administration teams who are considered to do a good job.

A lack of common reference frames?

Dale (1997) claims that a lack of reference frames for discussing quality in schools makes collaboration difficult. One of Dale's arguments for the tensions within the education system is the lack of knowledge of common terminology for discussing educational quality. Those who work in schools do not have the necessary education in pedagogy. When communication is not rooted in teaching related criteria, administration tends to dominate collaboration when the administration team set the agenda for collaboration.

To hold an administrative position in schools, one must have three years teaching experience and formal teacher training. Therefore, one would imagine that both administrators and teachers have the educational background Dale describes. However, an upper secondary school teacher's education is primarily in their specialised teaching subject(s) and not pedagogy. The majority of upper secondary school teachers have only six months practical pedagogical education, in addition to their five to seven years of their specialised subject studies. It is true, most teachers identify closely with their subjects, and they have developed pedagogical identities that are congruent with their subject being realised in strongly academic ways. At the same time, the administration team to a larger degree identify with new constructs of educational leaders as managing directors. Communication is unproblematic within a group possessing homogeneous reference frames and interests, but difficulties arise when those within a group have different reference frames. Between the different subject groups there is low permeability and high permanence, two of the defining criteria of balkanization (cf. Hargreaves 1994).

The teachers at school A and B spoke positively of the solidarity within departments, but were critical of the collaboration initiated by the administration team. Emphasis was placed upon meeting the authorities document requirements rather than discussing how to achieve good teaching. Having said that, school A did arrange form class teacher meetings to discuss pupil related problems. However, the risk of discussions becoming centred around administration matters increases when management does not have an identity connected to educational theory. The recent written regulation requirements, enforced by the authorities, have led to increased practical rationalisation. Education is regarded as a mechanical process where resource efficiency overshadows conflicting interests. A situation arises where the administration team identifies itself with the coordination of school activities through administration and regulation, and the teachers identify themselves with teaching their specific subject areas.

This gap between administration and teaching seems to be emphasised. At county level, for instance, further education courses for school administrators are often based upon general management and administration strategies used in the private sector. As Røvik (1992 & 1998) points out, in his report about modernisation within the public sector, the same solutions are applied in both public and private sectors, and in large and small companies. If an organisation is to prove its worth, it must be seen to incorporate the latest administrative strategies. Modernisation often runs the risk of discarding the old before fully understanding the new. The key management concepts for the 1990s are total quality management and quality assurance, and stem from economic theory rather than educational theory. This would support Dale's claim that the education system lacks a common identity.

But the Ministry for Educational Research and Church Affairs has outlined competence objectives for educational leadership within schools, as part of the administrative programme. These will include educational politics, curricula theory, evaluation and advisory topics. This may produce a new way of thinking (KUF 1996). This type of knowledge is equally important for all teachers as it is for administrators, but it will take more than a few, brief courses before it is firmly established. So far that seems more like a vision for the future.

Previously, further education courses for teachers have focused upon subject didactics. When Reform '94 was launched, upper secondary school teachers were invited to attend courses dealing with general teaching strategies and curriculum analysis. These were an attempt to establish a foundation of common knowledge for teachers and strengthen their professional identity. However, the teacher interviewed at school A and B indicated that these courses were too short, lacking in quality and, at times, irrelevant.

A symbolic perspective on teachers' perception of work-time agreement

Time is central to the formation of both school leaders and teachers' work (cf. Hargreaves 1994). Heads have experience how conflicts arise when they designate preparation time for particular purposes like collaborative planning, but at the same time they feel they have to be loyal to their employers at the municipal and central level. They are engaging in coping strategies to comply with legal mandates which sometimes seem impossible to implement. Yearly they have to send a report of how the collective work-time is organised to the Education Officer. They are both oppressors and oppressed. For some heads a dilemma of identity has been created. They want to be considered as a professional leader among both their teachers and their superiors. But what does it mean to be a professional? It seems like the criteria used by the municipality are different from criteria used by teachers.

The agreement breaks the established practice and work culture of the individual teacher who has always enjoyed a large degree of professional autonomy. Is the work-time agreement a symbol of an external attack upon teachers' autonomy? During the seventies it was correct to talk about bottom-up strategies in school development. Today it is seen to come from above. It seems to be a strong belief in top-down strategies in order to improve schools. Politicians and educational bureaucrats are interested in regulating classroom activities. Reports and inspections are seen as a means to guarantee educational quality in schools. Has the work-time agreement come to symbolise the authorities lack of confidence in the teachers and their use of work-time? When this is combined with a negative media coverage, tensions are heightened. Teacher autonomy is under attack from all fronts. External control of teaching is thought to ensure quality in schools and is a possible reason why an intermediate administration level is being introduced into upper secondary schools. For the teachers, the agreement symbolises the authorities' mistrust towards them. This explains the resentment felt towards the agreement. Mistrust breeds mistrust.

The new role of faculty heads

From a structural perspective, it is quite obvious that the head's role as employer, personnel manager and educational leader cannot be fulfilled effectively with the present organisation structure. However, from a political perspective, a redistribution of power occurs when hierarchical and administrative duties are intensified. Established zones of influences are challenged, and the extra administrative level disrupts the school's flat organisational structure and traditional distribution of duties. When this is coupled with external regulatory demands

from society, the teacher's autonomy is threatened. An intermediary position might solve some of these problems, but further problems are likely. To what extent depends upon the school culture. The administration team views the intermediate administrative level as the key to solving problems surrounding regulation and evaluation of individual teachers. However, there is the risk of teachers concentrating their efforts on voicing their protest, rather than organising good teaching for pupils.

Quality in teaching - who is setting the standards?

As already mention, mistrust breeds mistrust, and it seems like there is a power struggle in society for who should define qualitative teaching. From a political perspective, there are other social groups wishing to define educational quality, but, as yet, they have had little bearing upon the practice in schools. Intensified administration, in the form of external regulation, might solve some problems, but new problems will undoubtedly appear. In the long term, there is the risk that teachers' enthusiasm and commitment will be lost - a far greater problem for schools. It has still to be proved that intensified administration produces better schools. A symbolic perspective would explain it as a popular myth. Education cannot be developed mechanically with administrative decrees and regulations. It requires subjective communication and negotiation.

However, to continue fighting for one's individual right to set one's own standards for teaching does not correspond with the conditions of professionalism (Dale 1993, Handal 1989 & 1994). It is not the individual who is awarded autonomy, but the profession. From a political perspective, one can appreciate why collaboration imposed by the administration, and the introduction of more administrative levels, has been met with resistance and suspicion. It disrupts the established practice of autonomy and implies increased external regulation. It has also become a symbol of distrust. However, an autonomous profession does not necessarily mean better practice. On the contrary, it can prevent official regulation and limit perceptions and hinder modifications.

Tentative conclusions

The above discussion is based on qualitative data from two upper secondary schools. It does not claim that this is a typical situation at all schools. But it does identify and highlight some problematic aspects of changed decision-making structures in schools. It raises questions about what seems to be «taken-for-granted solutions» in our society to ensure quality in schools.

The work-time agreement's effect upon staff collaboration for improving the quality of education has been largely negative. It appears to have drained teachers of their enthusiasm and led to frustration among school administrators. Teachers feel they are mistrusted and that the time set aside for meetings is wasted. Unfortunately, energies are being concentrated upon the protection of established practice as opposed to educational improvements.

Both parents and students wish to make their voices heard in the schools. To continue fighting for one's individual right to set one's own standard, does not seem to increase society's trust in teaching. The tension between the teachers' demand for autonomy, for an independent right

to draw up and discuss the ethics of professional practice, and control of this practice by the democratic state, should in stead mobilise teachers to enter the public debate with their critique and internal defined criteria of teacher professionalism. A professional role entails professional responsibility, and this implies that teachers must make their experience more visible.

What effect the change in the role of the faculty head may have, is difficult to forecast. The project at school A has just started. So far, the administration team is enthusiastic about the project, but the teachers are sceptical. It may lead to a sharper division between the administration team and teachers. The new arrangement allows the head to take a greater educational leadership position, but may also strengthen the hierarchical management structure in schools. Furthermore, school administrators will be more closely linked to the county administration who will expect school administrators to enforce their directives. Heads and administration teams are seen, by both themselves and teachers, as representatives for those who demand management and regulation. The heads at school A and B regard themselves as agents of change responsible for implementing school reforms. The question is if the education policy lays down a managerial rather than an educational agenda for its exercise. Will it be an emphasis on 'school image' rather than 'educational vision'? School democracy and teacher professionalism are emphasised in national curriculum guidelines. However, other things like requirements of assessments reports from local schools, detailed descriptions of how to do things, new agreements on regulation of teachers' work time, which are happening simultaneously, may reduce the educational emphasis.

It seems important that the interaction between the *private* arena, where the teacher enjoys individual autonomy and personal responsibility for her teaching, and the *official* arena, where decisions affecting schools are made, must be treated as a continuous learning process. This presupposes knowledge of common terminology for discussing educational quality can help to analyse the everyday effectively. If not, there is a risk of discussions becoming centred around administration matters.

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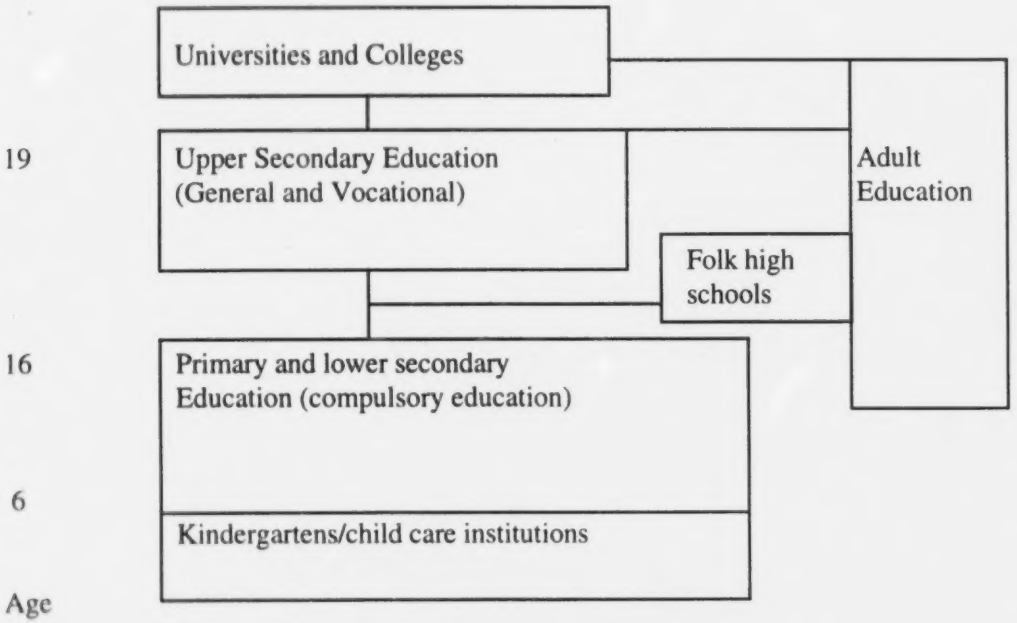
THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN NORWAY - AN OVERVIEW

In Norway the National Assembly, the «Storting», has the legislative power and the overall responsibility for education. The Storting consequently sets the principal objectives of education and the frames of its administrative structure. The Government exerts its authority in matters of education through *the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs.* This ministry covers all levels of education from primary and secondary to higher education, including adult education and Norwegian research policy. The Storting recently decided to lower the school starting age from seven to six in 1997, and to extend the period of compulsory schooling to ten years instead of nine (Reform -97). Pre-school education or child care institutions are the responsibility of *the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs.*

There are three main levels in the educational system:
1. compulsory school (ages 6-13 and lower secondary, ages 13-16);
2. upper secondary education, including apprenticeship training (ages 16-19);
3. tertiary education: colleges and universities.

The private sector in Norwegian education is small (1,6 % of pupils in compulsory school, and about 4 % in upper secondary). Private schools are regarded as a supplement to state schools rather than as competitors. Most of the private schools are based on a particular religious denomination or philosophy of life. As a rule private schools receive a grant that covers 85 % of the running costs.

Fig. 1: The Norwegian Education System.



Norway is divided into 19 counties, the administrative units of the regions, and 454 municipalities. The counties have the responsibility for providing *upper secondary education.*

The municipalities have the responsibility for the running of the *primary and lower secondary schools.* In higher education the administrative responsibility has to a great extent been delegated to the individual universities and institutions.

Decentralization of decision-making has been a general trend of Norwegian education since the late 1980s. The professional autonomy of the individual schools and institutions of higher education has gradually increased. A major step in the direction of decentralization was made by the introduction of a new sector grant system in 1986. The former earmarking of grants to primary and secondary education from central to local/regional authorities was then replaced by a system where local and regional authorities receive a lump sum covering all central government subsidies for school education and culture as well as the health service. As a consequence, the municipalities and counties now enjoy greater autonomy as regards educational provisions.

Fig. 2: Organization of Norwegian Education: Responsible bodies